

Article at a Glance

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Schwartz, Katrina (2016). KQED Mindshift: How We Will Learn. "20 Strategies for Motivating Reluctant Learners," PBS, March 3, 2016. <http://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2016/03/03/20-strategies-for-motivating-reluctant-learners>

Purpose of the Article: Engaging curriculum drives motivation for even the most reluctant learners, yet many teachers struggle to create and sustain experiences and environments that are truly motivating. When instruction is predicated on deep engagement, including predicting answers, conversing with one another and sharing in ways that follow appropriate routines and practices, learners not only achieve more but they also act out less. Classrooms that do not engage student attention fail to achieve their singular goal: to help students grow and learn.

Background Information:

- Effective instruction acknowledges the limits of attention span and provides intervals where learners are allowed to recharge and regroup. These intervals are built into classroom routines.
- For many children, these intervals optimally include movement and/or a change in perspective.
- Maintaining student engagement requires that teachers acknowledge the diverse needs and capacities of their learners.
- Teachers who are most successful at creating and sustaining engaging learning experiences have strategies that reflect multiple modalities, with many entry points to participation and content.

Key Findings:

Instruction that engages learners typically organizes around a set of procedures and routines. These procedures reflect the interests and capacities of the community while also inviting full participation as individuals. Prominent strategies include:

- providing learners with the chance to express an opinion or a priority through voting or conversation
- setting goals each day/week/month that are achievable, measurable, and believable

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- framing every lesson in a similar format, but executing it differently each time to reflect the diversity of interest and ability
- providing opportunities to activate background knowledge, dig deeply into content and then scaffolding learners' broader understanding by helping them integrate it with what they already know
- chunking information so that students can pause and think about what they are learning
- balancing and bundling diverse learning experiences together, which allows information to be stored in the brain in more than one place
- priming lessons with interesting questions and a clear understanding of each task
- having positive expectations
- providing opportunities for leadership and self-reflection

Application of Key Findings to Boardmaker Instructional Solutions:

All Boardmaker Instructional Solutions incorporate the following strategies that lead to engagement:

- Lessons are bundled each day in ways that account for diverse interest and ability and also acknowledge attentional limits.
- The instructional approach delivers information in chunks and then encourages students to revisit this information across a range of learning experiences (reading, writing, communicating, listening, reflecting, etc.)
- All Boardmaker Instructional Solutions incorporate an anchor-read-apply strategy which allows students to integrate background knowledge and then connect new learning to what they already know.
- Fully interactive and accessible activities include every student from a language and cognitive standpoint yet also presume competence.
- The instructional routines are predictable and framed similarly across time.
- Goals can be established either daily, weekly, or monthly by conforming to the instructional routine outlined in the Quick Lesson Guides.